

## 1. Purpose

To provide a framework for designing funding opportunities, developing initiatives and assessing proposals that assist the Surf Coast Shire community to recover from COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2. Context

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a Coronavirus. The virus emerged in Australia in early 2020 and is having significant impacts on health and economies at local, regional, national and international levels. The World Health Organisation declared a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 and a State of Emergency was declared in Victoria on 16 March 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions are impacting the lives and livelihoods of many ratepayers, residents and businesses across the Surf Coast Shire.

While an understanding of the full impacts of the pandemic is still emerging, Council is working closely with the residential and business communities and key organisations. These consultations (along with recognised state and federal recovery frameworks) have assisted in forming the guidelines to ensure Council support funding is directed to those activities and actions which will have the greatest impact and benefit.

The Draft Budget 2020-21 puts aside \$1 million to ensure that Council has capacity to provide support as needed. These funds may be used to support a range of initiatives. The allocation is subject to the adoption of the final budget, however the guidelines are developed on the draft budget to support a prompt response when the final budget is adopted.

## 3. Introduction

To enhance Council's ability to respond to support communities and businesses during and after the pandemic, Council established the following specific teams and functions:

- A Community Support Team (CST), working with Ward Councillors focussing on towns and localities to help people remain connected during and after the period of restriction, to raise issues and find solutions, and to inform Council of what is being experienced in local communities.
- An Economic Support Team (EST), working with partners to promote local businesses through the Buy Surf Coast website, responding to business queries and requests, disseminating relevant advice and gaining insights into the impacts on local businesses.
- An increased media and communications program, including increased presence in local newspapers and social media.

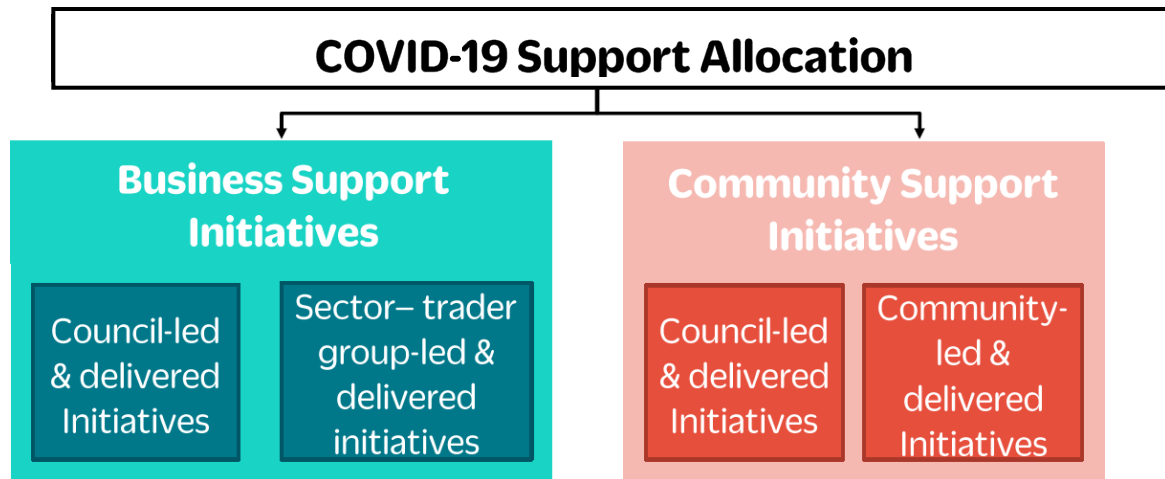
Community needs have emerged in the initial months of the pandemic and will continue to change as the focus shifts from relief to recovery. The recovery period may span years and Council's understanding of local needs will improve over time as those needs change also.

The capacity created by the allocations in the draft budget, provides flexibility for Council to both lead initiatives and support others to take the lead during the recovery. It allows for more immediate action and responses in the longer-term, possibly stretching beyond 2020-21, in accordance with research that finds that emergency recovery periods should be thought of in years rather than months.

## 4. Funding Focus

The COVID-19 Support Allocation can support initiatives in two focus areas;

1. Business Support Initiatives. These can be Council-led and delivered or Business Sector / Trader Organisation-led and delivered initiatives.
2. Community Support Initiatives. These can be Council-led and delivered or Community-led and delivered initiatives.



## 5. Guiding Principles

When considering which initiatives will be delivered by Council’s COVID-19 Support Allocation, the following nine principles will be taken into consideration. These principles will be used to assess and make decisions on Council-led and delivered initiatives and Business Sector / Community-led and delivered initiatives.

**NEED** - Support and recovery initiatives must address an evidence based issue(s) or deliver a new and better state not known before the pandemic. Initiatives should deliver broad community, business or industry sector benefit. Funding will not be considered for individual businesses or residents.

**TIME** - Recovery from this pandemic is likely to take years – Mental health, personal, financial and business impacts will exist long after the pandemic is over – so the support package should stretch over a 12 month period and potentially multiple years. This may require a staged approach to the use of funds so that recovery measures are not exhausted in the initial months. Initiatives funded should focus on having a lasting impact.

**STRENGTH-BASED** - Council needs to build on existing strengths and assets in communities and in the economy. Community Support initiatives must be able to demonstrate building community skills and capacity. Business support will not be a compensation package for particular businesses. Business support initiatives need to evidence clear return on investment outcomes for industry sectors impacted.

**HELPING RECOVERY** - Council’s support package will primarily focus two pillars of recovery - Social Pillar (Community Support) and Economic Pillar (Business Support) and will comprise a spread of community-led initiatives and Council led activities.

**BENEFITS** - Initiatives that deliver multiple benefits - especially if there is a focus on a Council Strategic objective - will be highly considered. E.g. Addressing Climate Emergency or creating long term industry sector benefits. Initiatives must include benefit(s) measurement, which must demonstrate economic and social returns on investment.

**PARTNERSHIPS** - Initiatives that develop partnerships and avoid duplication will be highly considered.

**DELIVERABLE** – Initiatives that are well planned and known by Council will be considered if they align with the Support and Recovery Package Principles.

**LOCAL** - Business Support initiatives may focus on procurement methods benefit or benefit local supply chains or industry sectors evidenced to have been impacted.

**EQUITY** - Council's support and recovery package should deliver support across places and demographic profiles and geographic areas. Consideration should be given to vulnerable people or those unfamiliar with Council processes.

## 6. Council initiatives

Council seeks to understand key issues and opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Officers will develop well-considered and targeted initiatives in accordance with these guidelines. Such proposals will be assessed against the criteria outlined below.

Officer recommendations will be considered by the Council as the decision-making body.

## 7. Community and business funding opportunities

Council will open funding rounds seeking to attract proposals for assistance and support from within the business and wider communities. These will consider the allocation of Council funds to organisations to lead initiatives within the shire.

These guidelines do not prescribe the dates and number of funding rounds to allow flexibility for Council to respond to the needs of the community as the pandemic and recovery evolves.

From time-to-time Council may receive proposals from organisations outside of organised funding rounds. These will be considered in accordance with these guidelines.

The key elements of organised funding rounds are:

- Opportunities will be widely promoted through Council's communication channels, networks and local media.
- Applications will be made via Council's online grant system.
- Officers will be available to provide information to prospective applicants.
- Applications will be assessed against the funding criteria within these guidelines.
- A panel of Council officers will assess each application against the criteria.
- Officers will make recommendations on each application to the Council.
- The Council will determine the allocation of funds to applicants.
- Communication about funding decisions will be applicants directly and the wider community.

- Council and the applicant enter in to a funding agreement outlining the responsibilities and requirements of the grant.

## 8. Assessment Criteria

Applicants will need to demonstrate how the initiative delivers outcomes aligned to assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are the key objectives for Business Support and Community Support Initiatives.

Assessment criteria may be adjusted for different funding rounds as determined by the Council, however are expected to be broadly in line with those outlined below.

Outcome assessment will form a key component of all assessment processes and will be a feature of a measurement and evaluation framework for each initiative after it is completed.

### Business Support Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria (Key objective)	Criteria Description
Benefits heavily impacted sectors in recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospitality (cafes, restaurants, pubs etc.), non-food retail, accommodation, creative, tourism, surfing, beverage manufacturing, health &amp; beauty, wellness. Initiatives from and /or including other sectors will be considered if an evidence based impact is established.</li> </ul>
Provides broad industry support in a recognised area of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert advice/ assistance assists businesses to recover quickly and has the potential to increase their skill and or knowledge to a higher level than prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic.</li> </ul>
Facilitates broad scale job outcomes during recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidences the amount of long term jobs created as a result of the initiative;</li> <li>• Generates jobs in sectors that were impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic as part of the initiative.</li> </ul>
Stimulates economic expenditure in the Surf Coast (business to business – resident to business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates improved localised supply chains for Surf Coast Shire businesses.</li> <li>• Reduces leakage of discretionary expenditure by Surf Coast residents.</li> <li>• Generates expenditure in Surf Coast businesses from outside the municipality.</li> </ul>
Markets Surf Coast Shire and stimulates length of stay and visitor expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boosting visitation, overnight stays and expenditure (particularly off peak) from those outside Surf Coast Shire;</li> <li>• The opportunities where Surf Coast Shire or the host township can be promoted, the nature of this promotion and the marketing reach;</li> <li>• The level of involvement of local businesses;</li> <li>• The ability of the initiative to trigger repeat visitation to Surf Coast Shire;</li> <li>• Reinforce and or strengthen the desired 'brand' of the host township or Surf Coast Shire in a positive way.</li> </ul>
Assists impacted sectors to transition services caused by COVID- 19 impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables businesses to move into new markets and become more sustainable;</li> <li>• Enhances the digital capabilities of business sectors to connect with existing or new markets.</li> </ul>

Assessment Criteria (Key objective)	Criteria Description
Creates long term industry sector benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides benefits that extend beyond the life of the initiative.</li> <li>Provides other identified benefits not listed above, which would significantly enhance the recovery phase of Surf Coast businesses.</li> </ul>
Is a regional initiative that has clear benefits for Surf Coast Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverages off regional campaigns and/ or initiatives to deliver greater benefits for the Surf Coast than what would otherwise be achieved</li> </ul>

## Community Support Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria (Key objective)	Criteria Description
Builds and strengthens community connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How the initiative will create social gathering opportunities and the level to which it will achieve this;</li> <li>The level to which people of diverse backgrounds and ages are brought together;</li> <li>The ability of the initiative to forge positive new relationships/ connections within communities that are ongoing.</li> <li>Level of involvement by local volunteers;</li> </ul>
Benefits broad range of community, with a specific focus on those experiencing disadvantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of how the initiative will positively impact the host community;</li> <li>Caters for needs of all abilities including people with disability</li> <li>Demonstrates positive impacts that will be sustained to many people.</li> <li>Provides positive environmental sustainable outcomes.</li> <li>Provides an element of environmental education or awareness for attendees.</li> </ul>
Supports and enhances community leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds new skills and capabilities in community organisations enabling them to become more sustainable and self-sufficient.</li> <li>Encourages young people (under 18 years) to be involved in community life and initiatives.</li> </ul>
Improves health and wellbeing of communities paying particular attention to mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiatives that contribute long term to healthier eating and active living.</li> <li>Reduces harmful drug and alcohol use and promotes tobacco free living.</li> <li>Takes a long term approach to supports people suffering hardship or experiencing poor mental health.</li> </ul>
Supports creative responses in recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports the development of arts &amp; culture and associated networks in the host township or greater Surf Coast Shire;</li> <li>Links attendees to culturally significant aspects of the host community/ies through the initiative and provides a point of celebration, reflection and connectivity.</li> <li>Builds sustainable activities that can last beyond a one off grant round.</li> </ul>

## 9. Eligibility guide for organisations seeking funding

Organisations are eligible to apply for funding if they meet the following criteria:

- The organisation's initiative is:
  - Within Surf Coast Shire and will specifically benefit impacted residents, businesses or industry sectors of Surf Coast Shire; and
  - Able to demonstrate your initiative addresses a need as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- The organisation is either:
  - An incorporated, not-for profit organisation or commercial organisation; or
  - An unincorporated, not-for-profit organisation with an auspice arrangement\* with an incorporated, not-for profit organisation; or
  - An organisation with an ABN or have an \*auspice arrangement (the initiative must not be for an individual);
- The organisation is a regional organisation with a clear link to the Surf Coast Shire;
- The organisation's initiative may include other municipalities, but must have a dominant and/or distinct component in Surf Coast Shire;
- The organisation's initiative meets and addresses the Assessment Criteria outlined in Section 8 of these guidelines;
- The organisation has spoken to the Community Support Team or Business Support Team prior to submitting an application.

*\* Auspicing allows not-for-profit, incorporated organisations to accept grant funding on behalf of organisations who are not incorporated. The auspice organisation responsibilities can be explained by grant contact officers and will be included in funding agreements.*

Those ineligible to apply for funding under the COVID-19 Support Program are:

- Organisations, groups, bodies, or businesses:
  - that are outside of the Surf Coast Shire Council (unless the initiative is for the specific benefit of residents and businesses within Surf Coast Shire).
  - which are not planning to undertake the initiative in the Surf Coast Shire.
  - who cannot demonstrate adequate levels of governance.
  - seeking any retrospective payment for an initiative or item that has already been installed, delivered or funded.
- Individuals are not eligible to apply.

## 10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Council's approach will be guided by the *National Disaster Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs* developed by the Australian and New Zealand School of Government.

Officer or community initiatives will be required to identify:

- Proposed outcomes

- Activities used to achieve the outcomes
- Outcome indicators
- Methods of data collection

Evaluation of outcomes will be required at the completion of a program or initiative (if data is available at that time) or at a later date by agreement.

Funding may be required to support monitoring and evaluation, commensurate with the level of funding allocated to the program or initiative.

Evaluation findings will be captured and used for the purpose of informing future decision-making.